

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 01707 181112Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 /094 W
-----055973 190220Z /64

R 181017Z APR OUI
FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6795
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 1707

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, UV, UR
SUBJ: DEPARTURE OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR

1. AT A RECEPTION LAST NIGHT, SOVIET AMBASSADOR
VADIM TIKUNOV TOLD ME THAT HE WILL BE LEAVING FOR
MOSCOW NEXT MONTH AND WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO OUAGADOUGOU.
HE SAID HE HAD MADE TWO SETS OF RESERVATIONS, ONE FOR MAY
17 ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT PRESIDENT LAMIZANA WILL WIN
THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ON THE FIRST BALLOT MAY 14.
THE SECOND SET OF RESERVATIONS ARE FOR MAY 31, ON THE
ASSUMPTION THAT, EVEN IF THERE IS A SECOND BALLOT ON
MAY 28, LAMIZANA WILL BE ELECTED.

2. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, TIKUNOV EXPLAINED THAT
LAMIZANA WAS STRONGLY ANTI-SOVIET AND HAD MADE LIFE VERY
DIFFICULT FOR HIM DURING HIS FOUR-YEAR TOUR OF DUTY
IN UPPER VOLTA. THERE WAS LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR THE
SOVIET UNION ANYWHERE IN UPPER VOLTA AND IT WAS NOT
LIKELY THAT THE SITUATION WOULD CHANGE IN THE NEAR
FUTURE. THE SOVIET EMBASSY WAS ISOLATED AND THERE
WAS LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO DO ANY USEFUL WORK. HE
SOMETIMES WONDERED WHY HIS GOVERNMENT HAD MAINTAINED
AN EMBASSY IN OUAGADOUGOU FOR SO LONG SINCE IT HAD NO
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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 01707 181112Z

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, OR STRATEGIC INTEREST IN UPPER
VOLTA. TIKUNOV ADDED THAT MOSCOW HAD MADE NO MOVE TO
NAME A NEW AMBASSADOR, AND HE INTIMATED THAT THE SOVIET
EMBASSY WOULD BE HEADED BY A CHARGE D'AFFAIRES FOR A
LONG PERIOD OF TIME.

3. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT TIKUNOV HAS HAD A TOUGH TIME IN OUAGADOUGOU. HE SPEAKS NO FRENCH EVEN THOUGH HE HAS BEEN TAKING FRENCH LESSONS DAILY FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. HE CONTINUES TO WORK THROUGH AN INTERPRETER, A PRACTICE WHICH MANY HIGH-RANKING VOLTAN OFFICIALS DISLIKE AND FIND WASTEFUL. THE USSR HAS CONTRIBUTED PRACTICALLY NOTHING TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UPPER VOLTA AND THIS HAS BEEN DEEPLY RESENTED BY THE VOLTANS. PRESIDENT LAMIZANA HAS ASKED ME ON MANY OCCASIONS WHETHER I HAD ANY IDEA OF WHAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY WAS DOING IN UPPER VOLTA. TIKUNOV'S REMARKS CLEARLY INDICATED THAT HE HAS NO HOPE THAT PROFESSOR JOSEPH KI-ZERBO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE "UNION PROGRESSISTE VOLTAIQUE" (A SLIGHTLY LEFTIST PARTY) WILL SUCCEED LAMIZANA AS HEAD OF STATE. GRAHAM

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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